



## City of Long Beach

Working Together to Serve

## Memorandum

**Date:** December 2, 2016

**To:** Patrick H. West, City Manager *T.M.L.*

**From:** Jess L. Romo, Director, Long Beach Airport *JLR*

**For:** Mayor and Members of the City Council

**Subject:** Long Beach Airport Master Plan

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On November 1, 2016, the City Council requested a report on the process, potential scope, and the pros and cons of developing a long-range Airport Master Plan (AMP). Working in conjunction with a consultant with experience in working on AMPs at all levels, staff has analyzed the requested items and is pleased to provide the Mayor and City Council with this information.

This memorandum also serves to summarize recent campus-wide planning work done to date, outline the regulatory requirements for completing an AMP, identify the components of an AMP, list the benefits and constraints of an AMP, examine the order of magnitude costs, and finally provide a recommendation as it relates to the Long Beach Airport (Airport).

Although the Airport does not have a current AMP on file, a number of planning-related work efforts have been completed, or are currently underway, to ensure the Airport is compliant with federal regulations.

### ***What planning has been done to date?***

Airport staff have undertaken specific planning studies to evaluate various components of the Airport in order to accommodate future aviation demand. A brief description of the studies pertaining to airport development are provided below:

1. Airport Layout Plan (ALP): The ALP is a detailed drawing set containing many data on the Airport that includes airport boundaries, existing buildings, orientation and lengths of runways and taxiways, flight instrumentation facilities, and planned modifications to name a few. An accompanying narrative report that provides broader explanation is a part of the ALP.
2. Terminal Area Improvement Project EIR: This was completed in 2006, and lead to the development of the new terminal and associated improvements.
3. Airfield Geometry Study (AGS): This airfield-focused study was completed in 2015.

4. FIS Study: This is the recently-commissioned feasibility study to evaluate whether the Airport is a suitable site to develop a Federal Inspection Services (FIS) facility to process arriving international passengers.

All of the studies noted above contribute to ensuring that the Airport is well-positioned to consider and support development as may be warranted. This includes federally mandated work, terminal improvements that have been completed, airfield improvements that increase safety and efficiency, and projects that may be undertaken in the future. The ALP is, by far, the most critical of these studies. As required by federal law, the Airport has a current ALP on file with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and is in process of receiving approval on a recently submitted ALP, which is expected in early 2017. It must be kept current and, therefore, must be updated on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, the ALP is a planning study, which is, in and of itself, a form of an AMP.

***What is a Master Plan? Is it required? What are the components?***

According to the FAA, an AMP is defined as a “comprehensive study of an airport and usually describes the short-, medium-, and long-term development plans needed to meet future aviation demand.” An AMP outlines an airport sponsor’s strategy for developing the airfield over time. An airport sponsor is not required to maintain a current AMP in order to justify or seek approval for development projects within an airport’s property; however, an airport sponsor is required, per Federal Grant Assurances, to maintain a current ALP.

Typical components of an AMP include those listed below. It should be noted that the FAA only approves the Aviation Demand Forecast and ALP. An AMP is often used as back-up justification for proposed new development depicted on the ALP.

- Existing Conditions Assessment – Inventory of existing facilities that will be used as a baseline for subsequent analyses;
- Aviation Demand Forecast – Forecasts of unconstrained aeronautical demand for short-, medium-, and long-term aviation activity (operations, passenger enplanements, peak activity, cargo volume, based aircraft, etc.);
- Facility Requirements – Assessment of the requirements for airside, terminal, landside, General Aviation facilities, any new facilities to support additional capacity, and new ancillary facilities needed to support the demands identified in the Aviation Demand Forecast;
- Alternatives Development and Evaluation – Identification of various alternatives that provide the requisite facilities, acreage, and services identified in the facility requirements;
- Facilities Implementation Plan – Description of the preferred new development plan and a presentation of the associated costs needed to implement the plan;

- Financial Feasibility Analysis – Financial plan for implementing the preferred new development plan, including identification of potential funding sources available to construct each project;
- Public Involvement – Public involvement plan that engages various stakeholders (technical and non-technical) to document key issues. This often includes periodic open public meetings throughout the AMP process; and,
- Airport Layout Plans – Set of detailed drawings depicting existing and proposed new future development at an airport.

Although not technically a component of an AMP, environmental review is required if the AMP meets the requirements of a “project” under the National Environmental Policy Act and California Environmental Quality Act (NEPA/CEQA), primarily because an AMP envisions growth of an airport and its facilities to meet future demand.

A standalone ALP, set as part of another planning effort, is a suitable alternative for seeking FAA approval for future development when there “have not been any major changes in airport activity or improvements that have had unanticipated consequences.” It is an airport sponsor’s prerogative and responsibility to identify airport facility needs, and the mechanism for conditional approval is to depict that development on an ALP.

Many airports throughout the country have elected to not prepare an AMP for a multitude of reasons, including complex relationships with airport stakeholders, in airports where growth was not desired or necessary, and time constraints to complete the project. It is estimated that an AMP can take between 18 and 36 months to complete under ideal conditions. However, in several cases that timeframe has been considerably longer. For example, Ontario International Airport initiated an AMP in the early 2000’s and only completed about half the required work over a five-year period, and the project remains unfinished. Van Nuys Airport initiated an AMP in 1992 and did not completed its AMP until 2006 - a 14-year undertaking.

Given the complexity of the Airport’s airfield campus, combination of commercial and general aviation users, sensitivity to environmental factors highlighted by the City’s Airport Noise Compatibility Ordinance (Noise Ordinance), it could take significantly longer (five or more years) to complete an AMP.

Relating to the Noise Ordinance, it is important to note that the AMP “Aviation Demand Forecast” element would consider airport capacity without the effect of the Noise Ordinance. Simply put, existing and potential demand over time would become part of the analysis and could reveal an ability to handle much more aviation traffic but for the existence of the Noise Ordinance. This finding would not invalidate the Noise Ordinance, but it would surely highlight the Airport’s potential to absorb future air traffic demand as part of the larger Southern California region.

***What are the benefits and constraints of doing an AMP?***

Benefits of completing and certifying an AMP include the following:

- Provides a common vision for new development at an airport aligned with airport stakeholders;
- Develops cohesive and comprehensive plans for all aviation facilities, including airside, terminal, landside, support facilities, General Aviation, and other airport-owned land, and shows how the various facilities and functions interrelate;
- An AMP is FAA grant-funding eligible, which can cover a majority of project expenditures, but FAA funding is not guaranteed;
- Provides for an open, transparent process for determining and evaluating airport needs;
- The inclusion of a public involvement process during the AMP can help prevent public dissent during implementation of projects; and,
- If done properly, it can reduce the amount of work needed to complete both the NEPA and CEQA environmental processes.

Constraints of preparing an AMP can include the following:

- Potentially opens new legal challenges to the City's Noise Ordinance by the public, FAA, users, and other stakeholders, as the primary goal of an AMP is to plan for new development and growth at an airport;
- The time constraint of completing an AMP can result in missing out on the need to implement near-term time-critical projects;
- Potentially reduces FAA-grant funding for other critical projects that have more definitive timelines for implementation;
- Absorbs a significant amount of airport staff resources to administer, manage, review, and provide guidance for the AMP; and,
- To be effective, an AMP should be updated every five to ten years, to reflect current conditions (economic and physical).

***What are the order of magnitude costs of preparing an AMP?***

The costs for preparing an AMP can vary widely from airport to airport, and from project to project. In California, a subsequent CEQA process must be completed in order to certify an AMP. Depending on the scope of the proposed developments, that cost can also vary widely. Many airports tailor their scope of work to focus master planning efforts on specific components of an airport (i.e.,



terminal focused, or airfield focused), with less attention and detail applied to other components. A holistic AMP at the Airport, inclusive of the CEQA environmental process, is estimated to range from approximately \$2 million to \$3.5 million, depending on the scope of the project. If the AMP process is delayed due to considerations noted earlier, the cost to complete it could be significantly higher.

***Recommendations:***

It is staff's opinion that an AMP is not required and would not be beneficial for the City the pursue one at this time for the following reasons

- Since the primary goal of an Airport Master Plan would be to plan for new development and potential growth at the Airport, development of the plan has the potential to conflict with the Airport Noise Ordinance and the City's goals of managing growth consistent with the Noise Ordinance.
- The costs, which would be borne by Airport users (primarily the air carrier sector) in the way of increased airline rates and charges and other fees, and the magnitude of these cost burdens over a multi-year program period, could make the Airport less cost competitive unless a funding source outside the rates and charges methodology were identified.
- The time required to complete an AMP would certainly require additional resources that would place additional financial burden on the Airport with an uncertain outcome, and potentially delay other capital projects currently being planned to enhance the Airport experience.
- The risk of analyzing capacity potentially opens new legal challenges to the City's Noise Ordinance which, if successfully challenged, could result in a significant change (increase) in the level of air traffic at the Airport. The City's current ALP provides an appropriate roadmap and strategic planning process for the Airport, and is the required document to meet federal regulations for airport planning.

Given these factors, City staff does not recommend proceeding with the Airport Master Plan at this time.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (562) 570-2605.

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